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This ninth-grade unit on language differences is intended to increase "the student's awareness or sensitivity to the ways in which language varies with the differing backgrounds and interests of those who use language," to develop his "abilities to adapt his language behavior to more effectively meet the demands of a variety of communication situations," and to increase his critical-thinking skills necessary for rational responses to emotive language. Excerpts from Jack London's "Martin Eden" and radio broadcasts of a farm market report, a professional football game, and a space flight are suggested to illustrate language differences based on age, sex, educational background, occupation, and avocation. Finally, in an attempt to show students that writers use language to reveal the backgrounds and interests of characters, the unit includes a reading list of novels in which this technique is evident. Teaching procedures, discussion questions, and introductory, transitional, and summary statements for lessons are found throughout the unit. (JS)

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Unit 901

Language Varies With Backgrounds and Interests

Grade 9

CAUTIONARY NOTE

These materials are for experimental use by Project English fellows and their associates who contributed to their development.

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CONTENT OUTLINE

I. Introduction to the unit: Review of fundamental principles

   A. Language is a code--a system of human speech sounds

   B. Language changes.

II. Introduction to language changes as functions of backgrounds and interests; language varies with:

   A. Age

   B. Sex

   C. Educational Background

   D. Occupational interests

III. Applying an understanding of these variations in practical discourse: Speech activity.

IV. Language is a function of culture: General review of variations and their inter-relationships in language behavior.

V. Conscious attempts to use language variations in characterization by writers of imaginative literature:

   A. Reading list

   B. Written assignment based on readings

VI. Conclusion of the unit

MATERIALS NEEDED

London, Jack. Martin Eden (New York: Macmillan, 1957)

PURPOSES OF THE UNIT

There are two basic purposes of this unit: to increase the student's awareness or sensitivity to the ways in which language varies with the differing backgrounds and interests of those who use language, and to develop the student's abilities to adapt his language behavior to more effectively meet the demands of a variety of communication situations. Again, as in the eighth grade unit, Language Varies With Approach, the concept of appropriateness is stressed. In order to appropriately suit his language to the changing situations, the student must be aware of the relationships between his own background and interests and those of the other persons involved in the communication situation. Coinciding, of course, with this awareness is the realization that other people make these conscious adaptions of language to elicit desired responses from the individual, thus developing in the student the critical thinking necessary for rational responses.

In this unit primary consideration will be given to the language influences of the following backgrounds and interests: age, sex, educational background, and occupational and avocational interests.

TO THE TEACHER

Procedures, Sample Questions for Discussion, Sample Introductions, Sample Transitions, and Sample Summaries are supplied for your guidance. It is assumed that you will adapt these to your own classes and students. More timely examples than those in the unit are highly recommended, since many of these might be dated. Likely answers to discussion questions are indicated in parentheses.

Special attention should be paid to the places in the unit in which the word ATTENTION is used. This serves to call your attention to specific kinds or generalizations which might be drawn at this point.

NOTE ON AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

A tape recording has been included in this unit. On this tape are excerpts from radio broadcasts, including:

1. Livestock market report

2. Professional football game

3. Radio message from Grissom orbital space flight.

Sample Introduction

OUTLINE OF THE UNIT

In the unit we are beginning we will be talking about the ways in which language varies with the backgrounds and interests of the people using it. We will be primarily concerned with influences on language by the age, the sex, the educational background, the occupational interests, and the avocational interests of the people involved.

When we start looking at examples of language variations, some of these will probably seem to be quite obvious to you; they should seem obvious, because you hear and use similar examples every day. We are going to try to find some of the underlying reasons for this, so you can more fully understand the variations and put them into more effective use in your own language behavior. You might be fully aware of the range of language variations that are dependent on backgrounds and interests. This awareness should be increased. You are probably not acquainted with the need for using these variations in your language behavior and the methods for using them. These, too, are purposes of this unit.

Sample Transition

Before we start looking at the actual variations in language, we should first consider some fundamental principles of language and communication. An understanding of these underlying principles should help you understand the more specific variations better.

Sample Lecture

The teacher might wish to supplement this lecture with additional examples and explanation.

One of the most important fundamental principles is that language changes. These changes occur in many forms: sounds, word meanings, and structural patterns, to name only a few. The important thing to remember is that this change is quite natural. Change is continuously going on, and it seems that it is quite inevitable; as environments and cultures change, the language changes accordingly. Even a hasty glance at the new happenings today, in the scientific fields, for instance, will show that language changes to meet the new demands. Certainly, I have over-simplified this, but a full discussion of these changes would take far more time than we have in this unit.

When we look at the nature of language itself, we can find language has the characteristics of a code, and this is a spoken code. The user of language combines sounds to form words, and these words act as representatives of the object, ideas, people, or events we are talking about. In communicating through language, then, we must use this code. We place our ideas or thoughts into the coded form that can be understood by those we are talking to. This leads to an important aspect of communication; if communication is to take place, the parties involved must know the code--they must share an understanding in order to communicate with each other.

Sample Transition

Remembering that language is a code, and that language is a continuously changing code, let's begin looking at the variations caused by differences in backgrounds and interests.

Sample Introduction

The first variation we will be discussing is a function of age--the age of the speaker or writer and the listener or reader. This shouldn't be too difficult to understand. If you listen to the students in the hall after this class, you will probably hear at least some language uses that would sound strange if they were coming from an older person. While the recognition of these variations might not be difficult, the reasons behind them are somewhat more complex.

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. Would there be any inherent reasons why people of different ages would use language differently?

   (An older person would usually have more experience on which he might base language.)

2. In other words, then, the older person might have a wider educational background in the sense of formal education as well as informal education by experience. What other influences might be found?

   (An older person would be likely to have more specific interests--interests related both to his vocation and to his avocation or leisure activities.)

Perhaps the only conclusion we can reach at this point is that age, when considered as an influence on language, is closely related to the other variations we mentioned as the primary concerns of this unit. As the individual's age changes, his interests also change. The inherent differences

ATTENTION

The relationship of age to changing interests should be clearly identified.

seem to center around the amount of experience that one has to draw upon. Since language is a function of the individual's total background of experience, this seems to be a reasonable assumption.

These variations or differences can be quite natural in some circumstances. Since the elder has a wider background of experience, he might use many references that draw upon that experience, and a younger person who hasn't experienced those things might not fully understand. In other circumstances, however, this might be done intentionally. We can use these age variations in language for a definite purpose. Let's use the example of the language of teenagers and see what purposes might influence its use.

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. Let's assume that you are talking to a friend on the telephone, and you are being asked to a movie. Your great aunt is sitting near the telephone, and you know that she violently opposes ninth graders going to movies. Since you know that language is a code, and that communication depends to a large extent upon mutual understanding of the code, how could you use this knowledge to avoid offending your great aunt?

   (The great aunt might not be familiar with various teenage terms for "movie", so one could possible use some of these.)

The teacher might ask the students to provide examples of some of the special terms.

This example might be somewhat extreme, but if you look carefully at the ways teenagers use language, I think you will find that this is done quite frequently. The special code or vocabulary is a possession of your specific group.

You can use it within the group with reasonably good communication, but an outsider might be rather confused. In some cases this special code might be very private, and those who share it in the group resent an outsider who tries to use their vocabulary.

Let's try an example that will show another purpose for using language variations; this is closely related to the one we've just been talking about. L:sten to this short narrative.

"Man, what a day for a drag race! Both of the beasts are chopped and channeled. Here they come smoking out of the chute. Like this is a real race! Those beasts are really herded."

Read to Class:
Note: This should be read exactly as written. Avoid dropping any words or changing them to contractions in order to make it sound more like spoken conversation. As it is written, it doesn't sound like teenage conversation, and you want students to recognize this.

Discuss:

2. How old do you think the author of this selection must be?

(It's difficult to tell, but several of the words suggest teenage slang. This selection, however, doesn't sound like a teenager.)

Students might overlook some factors here, in favor of the vocabulary used. If so, ask students if this sounds like the kind of language they would expect to hear from the teenagers they know.

While there is obviously an attempt to make this sound like teenage slang, the language somehow seems to be somewhat contrived--somewhat artificial. As a matter of fact, this was written by a teacher, and here you can see a frequent problem. When someone from one age groups tries to imitate the language of another age group, it often sounds artificial; the imitation, if it is going to be a good one, must depend on more than words alone. If the imitation is not accurate, the perceptive listener or reader is likely to question the person's

Note: Students might be asked to change this message in order to make it more appropriate for two teenagers at a drag strip. A certain amount of cuation should be exercised here, since one of the main differences might be that a realistic narrative would include some profanity.

membership in the age group. This leads us to the other purpose in language variations by age; age groups tend to identify their members by the language used. In effect, the language usage acts much like a password; if the user knows the code, he can be recognized as a member of the group. If he fails to use the code properly, he is recognized as an outsider, much as the speaker of a foreign language is often recognized by slightly different usages than we would expect of the native speaker.

ATTENTION

Identification based on language behavior should be stressed.

Sample Summary of the Discussion of AGE.

These are possible reasons or motivations underlying the age variations in language, but since these are often so closely tied to the differing interests involved, some of these motivations will be clarified later in the unit, when we study the specific interest and background differences.

Supplementary Class Activity: Directions

This assignment has two parts. Today in class, I want you to make a glossary of teenage slang that would be found in use by the students in this school. I'm well aware of the fact that some of the slang that is frequently used borders on, if not surpasses, profanity. For the purposes of this assignment, we'll leave these out. For the second part of the assignment, I want you to talk to your parents this evening and ask them for the teenage slang that was popular when they were in school. We will compare them when you are finished.

Sample Introduction

In much the same manner as we identify age groups by the language used, there are other identifications that might be made. I'd like you to listen to this short excerpt from a play.

Read to Class

JOHN: And don't forget, I want things served nicely. Use the best china and the filigree doilies. And at eleven o'clock just put the cigars and drinks right on the table and we'll stop playing. (Then there comes a knock on the outer door.) Come in! Hello, Bob!

BOB: Hello, John! I thought I'd run over early to see if I could help you with the lunch.

JOHN: Thanks--everything is ready. I baked a cake. Oh, say! That's a new hat, isn't it?

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. What are your reactions to this excerpt?
   (It sounds strange; it doesn't sound like men talking.)

If this sounds strange to you, the playwright has been successful. This short excerpt comes from George S. Kaufman's play, "If Men Played Cards as Women Do." He is taking advantage of our practical knowledge and expectations of language use. It's obvious that we do notice differences. If you think about it for a minute, I think you can probably remember movies, stories, or plays in which the writer uses these differences for humorous effect in the same way Kaufman has.

Let's see if we can find any reasons for the differences we usually expect, and then we'll check these and decide whether we can rely upon them.

2. Are there any physical differences which would affect the speech of women and men?

   (Obviously we usually can expect the voices to sound different, but there might be many exceptions here; some women have low voices and some men have high voices.)

3. What other differences might we expect?

   (Sometimes we expect women to talk more expressively than men, and this might be found in the intonation patterns used, but this would vary greatly, and there would be so many exceptions that this would not be an accurate way to judge.)

Note: Ninth graders will probably not be able to suggest this answer in this form. The teacher might ask students to read a sentence in the ways they would expect a man and woman to say it.

4. At this point then, we have suggested only a few ways for a defining expected differences; none of these has been a very predictable method. Can you think of any other reasons why men's language should differ from women's? Think about the excerpt from Kaufman's play.

   (In Kaufman's play, the men are talking about things that you usually would expect women to talk about.)

5. All right, can you take this a step further and make any kind of generalization about it?

   (The interests, the things men talk about, are expected to be somewhat different from women's interest's.)

Sample Conclusion and Transition

If one of our conclusions about language variations is that language varies by sex, we'd have to recognize that it makes a difference whether a man or a woman is speaking. There are other possibilities that we can't overlook. I think most of the boys in the class will probably agree that you talk to other boys in a different way than you talk to girls. Hopefully, anyway, you do alter your language a little bit in these different situations.

"The one conclusion we can be sure about, though, is that the differences are rather hard to define with any kind of certainty. We can agree, though, that the backgrounds and interests of men and women often differ, and this might naturally make some differences in the language. We are going to look more closely at language variations due to differences in backgrounds and interests, and perhaps this will help explain some of the language differences between men and women when we understand this better.

Sample Introduction

Early in the unit, I told you that we would be concerned with variations in language due to age, sex, educational background, occupational interests, and avocational interests. In looking at the first two, age and sex, it has been difficult to find definite variations with definite causes; there are so many other influences related to age and sex that it is almost impossible to set up clear generalizations. As we move on to consider the varied interests and backgrounds, we still are not going to find these generalizations easy to make, but we can try to understand the problems better, even though we can't set up a system of definite rules for language variations.

In most cases, these variations will actually not be new to you. While you might not always realize that you are using language that is heavily influenced by your interests and background, I think we can show this quite clearly in

this unit. We can also show that most of you are quite capable of manipulating your language when differences in backgrounds and interests make it appropriate. One of the purposes of the unit is to make you more aware of this and to help you improve this ability.

Let's turn now to some consideration of EDUCATION and its effects on your language behavior.

Sample Discussion

Discuss:

1. You've all heard of this word "education" many times. Before we begin talking about this, we ought to try to reach some kind of agreement about the term's meaning. Let's try a short word association test; what other words do you think of when you hear the word "education?"

   NOTE: The teacher might ask students to write these down.

   (Students responses will vary, but most words suggested will probably relate to the school and formal education.)

2. Quite understandably, most of your answers are related to the school, so we'll consider that first. What general purposes do you think the schools have?

   (Again the responses should vary greatly, but try to establish the generalization that schools try to help students understand the world and develop their abilities to operate within their environment.)

3. All right, then put these together and tell me what you think is <u>your</u> general purpose in school?

   (To <u>learn</u> about the world, to <u>learn</u> about our place in it, and to learn to deal with the ideas, events, and people with which we come in contact.)

The key word in your role in the school is learning; the school then tries to teach you these things. At this point, we can begin forming a definition of education as "a process of learning."

4. If we expand this definition to "education is a process of learning that takes place in schools," can we rely on this as a good definition?

   (The definition is too limited; what is said in this statement is true, but incomplete. One could interpret this to mean that the process occurs only in school.)

5. Would it be more satisfactory to say that education is a process of learning both in and out of school?

   (Yes.)

Sample Generalization

For the purposes of our discussion, we'll use the terms FORMAL and INFORMAL to describe education. While the dividing line between them might be rather hazy, we'll consider formal education as that which is related to the schools and informal education as that which is not related to the schools. This might seem like a rather simple-minded division line to draw, and I think this is true. The similarities and differences between formal and informal education are certainly much more complex than this, but it's not the time or place now for a drawn-out discussion of this matter.

Assuming that we are forced to work on a fairly general level, let's try to establish a few basic differences between formal and informal education, remembering that our primary concern here is the role of language in education.

Sample Discussion

Discuss:

1. If any of you have younger brothers or sisters, especially those under three years old, you have been aware of their language learning process. What are the first words we could probably expect from a young child?

Sample Discussion Questions Continued

(mama, daddy, car, some collection of sounds representing food, etc.)

2. Your suggestions indicate that children quickly learn or create names of things; after the young child has begun to learn these, what question does he almost constantly ask when he sees new things?

   ("what's that?")

3. Why do you think children ask this question? Why is it important for them to know the names of things?

   (Because the child quickly realizes that crying itself is not a very accurate way of asking for things, even though most parents learn to interpret different cries. If the child wants something, the most efficient way to ask for it besides pointing to it is to ask for it by name.)

4. I think we would be safe to call this process "education," and now we want to know what happens to language in this process. What immediate effect will be shown in the child's vocabulary?

   (Obviously it will increase as new names are added.)

5. Would there be any other kinds of changes in the child's language as he learns it?

   (It becomes more complex. He learns new word forms and language patterns.)

6. Let's make a big jump, then, and look at the teenager and the adult. What varieties of the names of things could we expect to see at this age?

   (The names of the objects, actions, ideas, and people with which he comes in contact.)

Write Brown's statement on the chalkboard.

I'd like to stop here for a minute and suggest a generalization about language. In his book, Words and Things, Roger Brown says, "Language is an inventory of culture." In other words, our language is a system for labeling and talking

about the things with which we have contact in our culture, and education, whether formal or informal, is closely related to and dependent upon this inventory. As our experience becomes more complex, our language must become more complex to enable us to operate within our environment. In effect, then, learning becomes a process of altering or changing this inventory.

Sample Discussion Questions

NOTE: Several of the suggested responses here are more carefully stated than those students will probably provide. The teacher will probably need to add other questions to elicit similar responses.

Discuss:

1. What kinds of changes in this inventory could we expect?

   (Additions when new language operations are learned. Subtractions when language operations are forgotten. Simplifications and complications when they are necessary.)

2. Let's carry this line of reasoning one step further. If this language inventory is a constantly changing one, what similarities could be expected between formal and informal education?

   (In both cases the language changes in the ways we just mentioned. In both cases, new situations in which people find themselves demand appropriate changes in the language.)

3. What differences could we expect?

   (The major differences would be found in the amount of planning and the kinds of controls in formal and informal education. Formal education would be characterized by more careful planning of definite and limited subject matter, usually arranged in a previously set sequence.)

4. Can you give me any examples of planned attempts to change language behavior in your classes?

   (This entire curriculum is actually very closely related to changes in language behavior. In English the emphasis is on the understanding and control of our language. In the foreign language class we are taught a new "inventory," most of

Sample Discussion Questions Continued

which overlaps with English. In social studies and science we learn new terms and new operations that relate to our environment. In mathematics we learn a specific, tightly controlled language that is used for a specific purpose.)

5. If we learn new words and language operations from experience, how would informal education differ from formal education?

   (In informal educatian the experiences are not always so carefully planned. Individually, we do not have as much control over the things that happen; we can't predict the experiences in the same way that school and the teacher can.)

6. Undoubtedly both kinds of education are highly important, but we should probably make some precautionary generalizations. If we can agree on what has been said so far, what do we need to remember about standards in the two kinds of education we've talked about?

   (The standards in informal education are not as carefully determined as they usually are in formal education.)

7. How does this relate to the English class then? Do people need an English class to learn how to talk?

   (No, most people learn to talk long before they find themselves in an English class; children learn to talk before they reach school age.)

8. Then why should you be expected to sit in English class throughout junior and senior high school?

   (The standards of English usage, the abilities to write and speak effectively, the understanding of the language process, and the reading of practical material and literature are usually not the concern of informal education. Even when informal education might be concerned with these, the materials are not usually constructed as carefully as they are in formal education.)

Sample Summary

It isn't our concern here to study the differences between formal and informal education in detail. We are concerned, rather, with the role of language in both situations. In both

cases people learn to manipulate language symbols to deal with the new situations. Changing environment and changing experience demand that language change accordingly. In most cases, the ability to learn depends on the ability to adjust language behavior.

Let's look at an example of this learning process from Jack London's book, Martin Eden. The first passage is from the early part of the book, and the second is from a later part.

Directions: Distribute examples of Martin Eden's speech which illustrates the effect of education on his language comparison of the following paragraphs is suggested: (References are to the Macmillan edition, New York, 1957)
1. p.11, beginning, "Yes, I ain't no invalid."
2. p.220, beginning, "And it seems to me."

Students should be given time to read the excerpt in class. While ninth graders frequently read the works of Jack London, this particular work is not recommended for the ninth grade reader. While able students could see the development of Martin Eden's education, they would have considerable trouble understanding some of the more adult implications of this book.

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. Now, what major experience has Martin gone through? He directly foreshadows it in the second paragraph of the first selection.

   (He has become educated.)

2. What evidence can you find in the selections to support this conclusion?

NOTE: The teacher might find it necessary to provide these categories for student evaluation.

(1. The admitted lack of education in the first selection has obviously been overcome in the second.

2. The usage in the first selection is characterized by the use of "ain't," but in the second selection, Martin's usage is much more formal.)

3. The pronunciation in the first selection suggests uneducated speech, while the second selection suggests no major differences from educated speech. In the first selection, Martin's speech is characterized by pronunciations such as "must 'a" for "must have," "an" for "and," "shun" for "shown," etc.

4. Diction - Word Choice
"real goods," "landed on," "up much," etc. in the first selection. Considerably larger vocabulary in the second selection.

5. Sentence structure - In the first selection, there are several fragments, while more formal and more complex structures are found in the later selection.

6. Point of view - In the first selection, Martin can only talk about his direct personal experience. In the second selection, he has expanded his view greatly; his objectivity here contrasts with his subjectivity in the earlier passage.

Sample Summary

In these two short passages, we certainly don't see the process of Martin Eden's education, but we can see some of the products of his education. We see it because the language behavior shows a definite change. As you have judged Martin Eden as an educated man from his language in the second selection, you also judge people with whom you have contact by observing their language behavior. Simply listening to someone speak or reading something that he has written gives you some fairly definite ideas about the person's

educational level. In other words a person's language can and does reveal certain aspects of his character, his background, and his experience.

We might notice one other thing about Martin Eden. We have said that language is influenced by background, but this is a general idea; background, as we have used the term, can include education, past experience, and interests. Looking only at the two paragraphs in the first passage, we can see another aspect of his language behavior.

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. From this selection, what do you think was Martin's occupation?

   (Sailor.)

2. What clues point to his being a sailor?

   (Words like "searchlight," "navigator," "sea," "compass," and "bearings.")

3. What is he talking about in this passage?

   (his ability to understand poetry.)

4. In terms of what, then, does he discuss these abilities?

   (In terms of the sea. He describes himself as "a navigator adrift on a strange sea without chart or compass."

5. When you look at this process in the case of Martin Eden, what generalization could we make about the way people adjust language behavior when they come into contact with new situations?

   (People often talk about the new situation in terms of a more familiar situation in their past experiences.)

6. Let's look at this in the way you would explain the simple addition problem, 2 plus 2 equals 4, to a little brother who can only count objects. How would you do this?

(Show him two groups of two objects like apples, have him count the objects in each group, and then put them all together and have him count the objects in the larger groups.

Sample Summary

Essentially you are doing the same thing with the little brother that Martin is doing in the first passage. In both cases the process is to talk about a new situation in terms of an older, more familiar one. You probably haven't noticed this, but I've been doing the same thing with you. I've been trying, in the last few minutes to teach you the process of METAPHOR. In order to do this, I have compared it to a simpler situation with which most of you might be familiar. I have talked about one thing in terms of something else. Martin Eden demonstrates this PROCESS OF METAPHOR in essentially the same way my example of teaching elementary addition uses the process. The important thing to remember is that the Metaphor usually tries to explain something new or create a new feeling by relating to an already familiar thing.

ATTENTION

The process of metaphor, its purposes and its basic method should be stressed here. The nature of Martin's metaphors provides a transition to the next section, "Language Varies with Interests."

Sample Transition and Introduction to Language Variations by Occupational Interests.

I wanted you to read this excerpt from Martin Eden in order to see how a writer can use or manipulate language to suggest characterization. In these selections, the differences in Martin's language behavior demonstrate an obvious change. We were concerned with the way the language reflected Martin's education, but we also have found that education is not the only thing illustrated by Martin's speech in the two selections. It is quite obvious that Martin, in the

first selection, had been a sailor. It was obvious because he used the language of seamen. Using Martin Eden as a starting point, we are now going to look at the influence of occupational interests on a person's language behavior. We'll find some examples of language that is specifically related to certain occupations, and perhaps we'll be able to suggest some reasons for these variations of language.

Pass out Excerpt #1

Let's start with an example. I'm sure that most of you have probably heard similar radio broadcasts about the livestock, grain, or financial markets, but I would be willing to bet that most of you have not listened very closely unless you have some interests in these fields. This is a transcript of a livestock market report; read it carefully and list the terms that you don't understand on a separate sheet of paper.

Looking closely at this market report, one of the first things you might see is that the type of market is not actually defined. This could be the stock market, the grain market, or the neighborhood market; the announcer, however, assumes that his audience understands what he is going to talk about. The very mention of the word "market" acts as an attention device.

Discuss:

1. Can you see any reasons why a farmer would respond to the word "market" by paying attention?

   (Since the farmer's business depends primarily on the changing prices he can expect for his products, any mention or suggestion of markets would be important to him.)

2. Looking at the lists of specialized terms I asked you to make, let's list these on the board.

(markets
South St. Paul
receipts
run
slaughter steers and heifers
cows
feeders
good
average choice
standard holstein steers
grades
barrows
gilts
butchers
strong
head
sheeps
lambs
cut-backs
slaughter and feeder lambs
prime-wooled slaughter
close)

Sample Summary of Specialized Terms

One thing that is noticeable immediately is that there are few, if any, terms that are completely new to you. As a matter of fact, many of these are quite common. Words like "cows," "good," and "grades" are quite familiar.

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. Let's take one of these as an example; when this announcer says "grades," does he mean the kind of grades students get in school?

   (No, this is a different system of grading, but it is somewhat similar in that both systems make some attempt to judge relative quality.)

2. That's right. I don't recall marking any report cards "average choice." Let's take another example; when the report says "butchers," does this mean the kind of butcher who works in the food store?

EXCERPT #1

Well, a brief look at some of the markets of last week, then, to sort of bring you up to date. Looking at South St. Paul, then, for the past week, cattle receipts number 21,000, compared to 22,900 the previous week, 20,600 a year ago. About 70% of the run was slaughter steers and heifers, fifteen to twenty percent cows; balance mainly feeders. Steers and heifers were largely good to average choice. A moderate showing of the standard holstein steers.

Hog numbers were 47,400 last week, about 5,500 less than the week before. Mixed grades of 200 to 270 pound barrows and filts predominated. Also a fair representation of the 270 to 300 pound butchers. Prices worked high early in the week but lost much of that advance later, and so compared with the previous week, barrows and gilts strong to 25 cents higher.

There was a dip of 3000 head in the marketing for sheeps and lambs last week. Cutbacks stimulated demand for both slaughter and feeder lambs. Some of the advance was erased on the slaughter lambs, but closing sales on choice and prime-wooled slaughter lambs fully 50 cents higher than the week's previous close.

From a Farm News Report, WCCO Radio, Minneapolis, Minnesota

(Obviously not. We usually don't think of Mr. Smith, the butcher in a food store, being unloaded from a truck-load of hogs at a slaughter house.)

3. Let's look at a more general case. One of the specialized terms in this report is "cows." To most of us, "cow" is a fairly general term, meaning any female member of the cattle family. Is this true in the report?

(No, in this report, "cow" is a special type in this class of female cattle. "Heifer" is another type within the class.)

ATTENTION

Important Generalization

4. In other words, then, the livestock report uses some specialized meanings for some general terms. To a person having no interest in the cattle business, it wouldn't make much difference whether female cattle were called cows or heifers; the general meaning of "cow" would probably suffice. Can you see any other examples of this process?

NOTE: Students will need help in phrasing this.

(Yes, both "hogs" and "sheep" have similar processes. The general terms aren't specific enough to make the distinctions necessary in the livestock market.)

Sample Summary and Generalization

At this point, I think we are ready to make a few generalizations about this report. We have seen that the livestock market demands more specific distinctions than people outside the livestock business would need to know. The specialized occupations require language that appropriately describes the things that are important to the occupation. We can assume that a farmer who raises livestock has been exposed to these specialized terms very frequently, and that he understands them, even though other people probably have difficulty understanding them. After all, there isn't much reason for people who are not directly involved in

the livestock business to know the difference between a slaughter lamb and a feeder lamb. For most of us, the general term "lamb" is usually enough.

There's something else about this report that you might notice; remember that the farmer probably listens to the market reports every day.

Procedure: Ask students to rewrite one paragraph of the report in usage that would be generally understood.

I'd like you to rewrite one paragraph of this report. You have isolated several terms that have specific meanings; in order to make these understandable for the average person who is not in the livestock business, you will have to change some of these terms. Since it is the shortest, I'd recommend the last paragraph.

(Allow time for students to do this in class.)

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. All right, let's read some of your revisions.

   (Students will read some of their revisions aloud.)

2. What characteristics of your revisions are different from the original report?

   (1. The revisions are longer.
   2. The specialized terms have been explained by using more modifiers.)

3. Can you draw any conclusions about occupational language from these differences?

   (Since interested people hear these terms every day, they don't need to have everything spelled out. They probably hear the same form of report each time.)

NOTE: Students might be asked to use another livestock market report and note the similar forms.

Sample Introduction to CONCEPT OF CODABILITY

While you probably have not heard the terms of this before, you have noticed a fundamental characteristic about occupational language, especially when the same

NOTE: Stress the fact that it is the people who are interested in the particular subject who will learn to accept the short form. It often will be found that the general public will not understand or accept the shortened form, regarding it as jargon.

language is frequently used. This frequent use often results in abbreviated forms instead of the longer forms. Remembering that we talked about language as a code, we can say here that these shortened forms are easier forms of the longer code. The term for this is CODABILITY. When a word or phrase is frequently used, we often try to find a shorter, more efficient form to use. We must remember, though, that we depend on the audience to understand these shortened forms. If the audience doesn't, the result is similar to the lack of understanding of the livestock market that some of us demonstrated.

It shouldn't be difficult to test our conclusions about occupational influences on language. We have only looked at one occupation so far. For this assignment, I want you to find a publication related to a specific occupation and examine the use of language in it. There are many magazines and journals that should be easy to find; you might find a good example in a publication your parents read. Professional groups, unions, and trade magazines should work nicely for this assignment.

When you have found a publication, read one or two articles. Write down the terms you don't understand. Then check these in a dictionary to find specialized meanings. In some cases, you'll find words that are definitely related to occupation; in other cases, you will probably find new specialized meanings for familiar words.

NOTE: When students have finished this assignment, the teacher might wish to use several examples in subsequent class discussion. Try to draw generalizations from students about these language variations. The following are possible generalizations that might be drawn:

1. Common interest and common experience give specific meanings to terms having a more general meaning outside the special interest group.

2. Specialized vocabularies make distinctions necessary to the occupational group, but unnecessary to the general public.

3. High frequency of usage often results in abbreviation; some forms that are more "codable" than others.

4. In highly repetitious forms, writers sometimes use limited synonyms to provide for some variety.

Sample Transition

The examples we have found tend to be limited fairly strictly to the occupational groups. I'd like to give you a few examples now that show a slightly different process. In some cases, when the general interest in an occupational group is high enough, something different happens.

I'll read a passage to you that comes from a highly specialized occupational group. I want you to try to decide what group this is.

To be read to class

"Periscope has retracted.
T minus 15 seconds and counting.
Ten, nin, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two , one.
Ignition--lift off--lift off.
Projection is AOK.
Point surgeon reports that the pilot is in excellent physical condition.
Gus reports he is picking up a little bit of the noise and vibration.
The fuel is go--1 1/2 G.
The cabin pressure has settled down to five.
All systems reporting go."

Sample Discussion Questions

Discuss:

1. What occupational group is this?

   (Space program.)

2. Your reaction to this is interesting; here we have a number of extremely specialized terms, but you seem to understand them. Why should the general public understand terms like "lift off, projector, AOK, G, and go"?

   (There are two reasons: the space program receives considerable news coverage, including actual conversations between the astronauts and the ground control, and people also have a high interest in the program, even if it didn't get such coverage.)

The teacher might ask students to explain the meanings of the specialized terms.

Sample Explanation of Effects of Space Program Jargon

All right, in this case the public becomes quite familiar with the specialized language of an occupational group. The group is important to the public, and it receives great publicity. Even a short look at the advertising gimmicks shortly after the United States put space vehicles into orbit will show that terms like "go" and "AOK" were widely used for several months. Automobile manufacturers were quick to use the new associations to the word "go" to imply that their cars were technically advanced to fit into the technologically-advanced world suggested by space exploration.

Procedure: Pass out Excerpt #2 to class.

Let's look at one more example. I'm passing out a transcript of a radio broadcast of a professional football game. Read it carefully, especially examining the language used. For some of you, this will be easy to read; to others, probably most of the girls, this excerpt will be meaningless.

EXCERPT #2

Now the Vikings come out of the huddle. Wide to the left is Jerry Reichow. Playing flanker, split to the left, is Paul Flatley. There's a fake shovel pass, hand off to the fullback, and he hits straight ahead, and it is Tommy Mason to the 30-yard line and almost to the 31--picks up four on the play. We'll see where his forward progress is ruled stop, and it may be the 31. Just short of it, a near five-yards gain, as Tommy Mason got the ball from the left halfback position after the fake shovel pass to fullback Tommy Wilson. Second down and a long five to go. Wide to the right is Jerry Reichow, flanker Gordie Smith on the strong side and split out to the right. Back is Tarkenton, sets up, his man is open; Reichow to 33, circles from Burkett to 35, 36. Fumbles and the Vikings I believed recovered, though there was a Colt after the ball, too. The ball may have been blown dead; it is right in the vicinity of the 36, near a first down, if the Vikings have the ball--possession of it. Gary Huth had dived on it, and it is he that is getting up off the pigskin. Gary Huth, the guard who was helping out on pass protection, dove straight ahead to recover. They are going to measure. We feel certain it is a first down by about the length of the football. Bring the yardstick from this side of the field, place it down, and we can already see it is a first down by exactly the length of a football.

From WCCO Radio, Minneapolis, Minnesota

(Allow class time for reading.)

Sample Discussion

My guess is that you have heard similar broadcasts many times without thinking about the language. Radio coverage of football and other sports is so common that, whether people understand it or not, they probably don't notice the language. A person who is not interested will hear the highly specialized language, realize it is describing something in which he is not interested, and tune in another station. Let's change this procedure, though, and look specifically at this language. There are quite a few things we might notice about this.

Sample Questions

1. First, we'll make a list of all the terms we can find that have a meaning special to football.

List suggested terms on chalkboard.

(Students respond by suggesting terms and phrases.)

2. How many terms can you find that are not words adapted from general usage and given a specialized meaning?

(fullback, halfback, football)

3. Even the three terms "fullback, halfback, and football" are questionable here; can any of you argue that these are essentially metaphors?

(All three are comprised of common words, and these are combined in the first two to describe the distance from the line of scrimmage in the single wing formation. "Foot" and "ball" are combined to denote a certain type of ball game, as opposed to baseball, basketball, etc.)

Sample Summary

Even though these are not specifically related to this particular unit, we might look at two other aspects of this broadcast. One is the rather curious combination of highly

Sample Summary Continued

formal usage and football slang. In the sentence, "Gary Huth had dived on it, and it is he that is getting up off the pigskin" we see the use of "dived" and "it is he," rather formal usages, followed by "that," a rather unconventional combination, and the slang word "pigskin." You might also notice that in the next sentence, the announcer uses "dove" instead of "dived."

The other aspect we might briefly look at concerns the method used by this announcer to describe the action in the football game. It's important to remember that this is a radio broadcast; there are many differences between the radio commentary and one we would expect on television. Another thing that should be taken into account is that the radio audience relies solely on the announcer's description; it shouldn't be difficult to find several examples of description in considerable detail. The description of the plays, the many comments about the number of yards gained and the placement of the ball, and the description of the measurement are all examples of this. Especially when the account is written out, as we have it here, it becomes almost painfully obvious that the announcer repeats himself frequently. When we see this in written form, it looks unnecessary, but in spoken form it is quite necessary. The radio audience cannot ask the announcer to repeat something that is not clear; all we have to do with the written account

is read the statement again. The point is that a radio announcer, and any speaker for that matter, must be more repetitious in most situations than a writer.

Sample Transition to Language Varies with Avocational Interests

In this particular example, we have an occupation and its specialized language. It is obvious that many people, even though they are not professional football players, understand this easily. Again, we see occupational language picked up by a large portion of the general public. In this case, even more than in the space program language, it is the interest of the audience that makes the language understandable. This leads us nicely into the last variation we will be discussing--language varies with avocational interests.

Sample Introduction

I don't think it is necessary to spend much time on the specific ways in which language varies with avocational interests. Actually, these language variations follow patterns that are quite similar to the ways in which language varies with occupational interests. Perhaps the only major difference is that the occupational variations are more mandatory than those related to hobbies or leisure interests.

Class Activity: Directions

Since most ninth grade students don't have direct, personal experience with occupations, it is somewhat difficult to ask you to report on personal examples. However, I think I can assume that most of you have leisure interests that might help illustrate some of the ways in which language

varies. Now I want you to prepare a speech in which you discuss some aspect of a hobby or interest, especially one which includes some specialized language. In this assignment, we can see the process working in both occupational and avocational variations. This will be a two-to five-minute speech. You will explain something that interests you, and you do not need to worry about explaining the specialized terms that you must use to inform your audience about the topic.

In the preparation of this speech, I would suggest the following procedure:

1. Choose the topic
2. Gather material needed to explain the topic
3. Organize the material; find your major points and prepare supporting material
4. Practice the speech aloud

To the Teacher:

Additional Suggestions for the Speech Assignment

The specific procedures used in this assignment will vary to fit appropriately into your curriculum. If more emphasis on the speaking techniques is wanted, this might well come at this point in the unit. Since there are so many possible approaches to this speech activity, this unit will not try to specifically outline these.

It is recommended that students in the audience be asked to record any terms that are not understood. In addition to this, these terms might be clarified after the speech. It should be relatively easy to show students the ways in which they use the process of metaphor in explaining specialized terms. Normally, students will try to find appropriate comparisons, drawn from the experience of the students who do not understand the specialized terms or phrases.

If the speech situation is not appropriate for your class, a similar assignment might be handled from the small discussion group approach. In this case, the teacher tries to create groups as heterogeneous as possible, avoiding grouping students with similar topics. The discussants then explain their topics to the members of the group, and the other members of these groups can be asked to record specific

examples that might be discussed with the entire class later. The chief advantages of this assignment are that it is more informal and that it takes considerably less class time than individual speeches.

Regardless of the procedure used, the responses will vary greatly, and the teacher will need to adapt the culminating activities accordingly.

NOTE: After this assignment has been completed, the teacher might wish to give a quiz on the five language variations that have been discussed. As a precautionary note, the students will probably find it quite difficult to isolate definitive differences between these variations. These were presented sequentially and treated, essentially, as separate items, but after all five have been discussed, students should notice (or should be led to notice) that these variations are not mutually exclusive. In reality, all these influences interact, producing complex language behavior.

Sample Summary

We have been talking about five major influences on language behavior, and all of these are related to the general statement, language varies with backgrounds and interests. We have broken this down into AGE, SEX, EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND, OCCUPATIONAL INTERESTS, and AVOCATIONAL INTERESTS. In a way, we have discussed these as separate subjects, and this is probably somewhat misleading. Even a quick glance at the ways in which language is used should tell us that these distinctions aren't as neatly separated as we perhaps have suggested. If we look at one individual, it becomes apparent that all these influences might be operating at the same time. The generalization we can reach is that a person's language behavior is extremely complex, being influenced by immediate situations, but, probably more importantly, being influenced by many more related experiences in that person's past. We can use these categories we have been discussing to analyze parts of a person's language behavior,

ATTENTION

Important Generalization

Sample Summary Continued

but to analyze all of the person's language behavior, it becomes obvious that these categories cannot be considered as separate items, but that they should be seen as related influences.

In the largest context, the influences of the five categories we have discussed seem rather small. When we look at the relationships between a language and the culture in which the language is spoken, it becomes obvious that language is influenced by a wide variety of things. Earlier, we talked about language as an inventory of culture; language is made up of symbols for the ideas, people, actions, and relationships that make up our culture. Language is one of the major functions of culture; it provides people with a set of tools necessary to man, whether as an individual or as a group. Obviously, since language and culture are so closely related, the language reflects the culture.

We can look at this from a different point of view. By listening to language or reading written language, we can usually find out something about the speaker or writer. Actually most of us do this all the time, although we don't do it in a very systematic way. Language, because it reflects the influence of aspects like age, sex, education, occupation, and avocation, reveals some aspects of people who use it. I know we can find many examples of this in everyday life, but we're going to be looking at this from a

different view. When an author writes a story, one of the usual jobs he must do is show something about the characters in the story. Now he could simply explain all the characteristics of the people, but this would probably not be as vivid or as interesting as it can be when the author tells us about the characters through the characters' own actions and their own words. In this way we understand a little more about the character as the story goes along.

Directions: Pass Out Assignment Sheet #1, page 3#A

We're going to be reading from a list of books, and I want you to pay particular attention to the ways in which the language of the characters tell us something about the backgrounds and interests of the characters.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET #1

Directions:

The following reading list is comprised of books in which the author uses the principles we have been talking about to add to characterization. The authors, realizing that language varies in the ways we have been discussing, use the language of characters to reveal some aspects of the characters. By using this technique, the author is able to show something about the character without stepping out of the story line and openly telling the reader what the character is like.

Choose one of these books for your reading. Pay particular attention to the language of the characters. After you have read the book, there will be a short paper due. This is not a book report, and the paper should not be written as a book report. For this assignment, we are interested in a more specific analysis. The paper is to be centered around the ways in which the author uses language to reflect the backgrounds and interests of the characters. In most cases, you will probably want to concentrate on only one or two characters.

TITLE	AUTHOR	EMPHASIS
Good-bye, My Lady	Street	Age, education
Swiftwater	Annixter	Age, education, occupation
The Yearling	Rawlings	Age, education
And Now Miguel	Krumgold	Cultures
The Light in the Forest	Richter	Cultures
A Love, or a Season	Stolz	Age
Fahrenheit 451	Bradbury	Occupation, Cultures
Caves of Steel	Asimov	Occupation, Cultures
A Single Pebble	Hersey	Cultures
April Morning	Fast	Age
Almost Like Sisters	Cavanna	Age, Sex
Prince and the Pauper	Clemens	Education
Jeremy Croven	Collin-Smith	Cultures
Hannah Herself	Franchere	Education
The Nun's Story	Hulme	Education, occupation
Follow Your Dream (Non-Fiction)	Holmes	Sex, occupation
Sports: Mirror of American Life	Boyle	Occupation, avocation

NOTE TO TEACHER: Concluding the Unit

A final examination has not been included in this unit. Should the teacher wish to use a final examination, a number of short answer items might be constructed by asking students to identify and/or comment on language in selected examples. This unit, however, is not intended for specific recall information. The interrelationships of the language variations discussed are too complex for this approach. As a concluding activity, the paper based on the books in the list on page 33A demands that students examine these variations in a context, recognizing some of the complexities normally involved in language behavior. This approach, using a general application of the individual variations in context, attempts to avoid problems caused by students trying to use artificial categories in isolation.

While the teacher will wish to vary the conclusion of the unit appropriately to the individual situation, it is recommended that at least some discussion of the examples found in readings by students be included at the end of the unit. In a culminating discussion such as this, students should be asked to provide examples from their books, showing what effects are achieved by the author. Students should also be asked to make critical evaluations of the authors' attempts to characterize through language.